

RECKLESS RALPH'S DIME NOVEL ROUNDUP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers. Published by Ralph F. Cummings, Pleasant St., Grafton, Mass., U. S. A. Price \$1.00 per year or ten cents a copy.

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THE RALPH F. CUMMINGS DIME NOVEL COLLECTION

by
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President Happy Hours Brotherhood

I find it is now my turn to write about my own collection of old time dime and nickel novels, so here we are.

A lot of you fellows, no doubt, think that I have a real big collection of old-timers, but I'm afraid I'll have to own up that I haven't quite the large collection that you folks think I have—far from it.

I've broken into my collection very badly in the last five to six years, as I needed the money and I had to sell wherever I could. I do believe I have around 2,000 old novels and story-papers; while I have just as many again, if not more, of English novels, making a collection totalling from 4,000 to 5,000 in all. Twice I have had nice runs of the Boys of New York from No. 526 to 1000 but had to sell them. I have but three or four issues at the present time. I had many others, almost complete, such as Golden Weekly, Old Sleuth Weekly, Log Cabin Library, and long runs of Happy Days; also Tip Top, Three Chums, New Tip Top, Blue and Grey, Young Klondike, Klondike Kit, Handsome Harry, Yankee Doodle, Young Glory, Adventure, Starry Flag, all the small size Diamond Dick's, Shield, American Indian, Western, and lots of other runs and sets, but now they are all gone with the exception of a few of each which I still have.

But I had heaps of fun in collecting them just the same, and am also glad that I have helped others all I could, and will always continue to do so as long as I live, and as long as novels can be had.

I am now saving a set of Liberty Boys of '76, as this was one of the weeklies that helped me get a start, and besides I always liked this novel,

just like some of you care a lot for Beadle's and others, and I do too as far as that is concerned.

I only have about 300 Liberty Boys of '76 in all, mostly in the 600's to 1000's, as I like the large size only. I may, however, collect the small size some time—maybe not. Anyway, it's a lot of fun in collecting them.

As I said before, it probably has been the opinion of many of you collectors that I would have thousands upon thousands of novels and story-papers, but I am sorry to inform you that such is not the case. I have always helped other collectors when the opportunity presented itself, so you see that I just can't sell off too many at a time. I have often looked long at some of the novels I was going to let go, but I always thought of the other fellows who wanted them maybe worse than I did, so I just let them go.

Of many of the old novels I now have but one or two, in some cases perhaps a half dozen or more, such as Beadle's Dime Novels, Beadle's New Dime Novels, DeWitt's Champion novels, DeWitt's 10c Romances, Munro's 10c Novels, Dauley's New War Novels, Ornum's 10c Popular Novels, Ornum's Indian Novels, The Black Highwaymen Novels, Beadle and Adam's 20c Novels, Ornum's 15c Romances, Richmond's 10c Novels, Ten Cent Novellettes, Beadle's Dime Song Books, Beadle's Dime Biographical Library, Men of the Times, Beadle's American Tales, Frank Starr's American Novels, Irvin's 10c Novels, Hilton's 10c Novels, Boy's Own Novels, etc; also No. 1 of Claude Duval 10c Novels, without a front cover, but no matter I will keep it until I perchance land this one with a cover.

Some time ago I landed one I had never before heard of, being Redpath's Books for the Campfires. This is a 10c novel, same size as any other, sort of dark green covers, and runs to 102 pages. The title is "Clotella—A Tale of the Southern States," by W. W.

Brown, published by James Redpath, 221 Washington Street, Boston, Mass. date 1864. The one I have is No. 2. I do not know whether they ran any higher or not. Sure is a prize to my way of thinking. It has a picture on the front cover the same as any other novel, also picture inside cover. The list of the other titles that either appeared or did not are as follows:

No. 1 On Picket Duty, and Other Tales, by L. M. Alcott

No. 2 Clotella, a Tale of the Southern States, by W. W. Brown

No. 3 The Vendette (no author given)

No. 4 Gulliver's Travels--A Voyage to Lilliput (no author given)

No. 5 The Battle of Waterloo, by Victor Hugo

I also have the only number to have been published of Beadle's Dime Pocket Joke Book No. 1, published in 1875, tells about T. Tosh's Grand Excursion to Europe. He surely had plenty of trials and triumphs before the end of the novel is reached. It is full of pictures of Mr. Tosh's travels too.

Another rare one I have is E. Beadle's 10c Novels No. 2, The Trapper's Retreat, by Captain Latham C. Carleton. I also have No. 8, Israel Putnam in Beadle's Lives of Great Americans.

As the fellow says, I haven't many, but what I have are dandies. I have perhaps around 150 of Beadle's Dime Libraries, of which quite a few are scout stories, concerning Western pirates, a few detective stories, etc., also about 50 to 60 Beadle's Half Dimes of which some are the rarest that can be found. Both libraries are mostly all in fine shape. I have a few Beadle's Popular Libraries, also some Beadle's Pocket and Beadle's Boys Library, small size. I only have one Beadle's Boys Library, large size, No. 2, a Captain Mayne Reid story.

I also have 50 or thereabouts of the following Libraries: Nick Carter, Young Sleuth, N. Y. Detective, Wide Awake, Frank Reade, Campfire, Boys Star, Diamond Dick, N. Y. 5c Library, Broadway, Star War, Bob Brooks, Adventure, Little Chief, Cricket, Old Cap Collier, Old Sleuth, Nugget, Army & Navy, Nickel, The Novelette, Temperance, etc.

Then I have around one thousand old story-papers such as Beadle's Banner, Beadle's Weekly, The Young New Yorker, Belles and Beaux, Saturday Star Journal, N. Y. Saturday Journal, New and Old Friends, large, all of Beadle's, Boys of New York, Young Men or America, Golden Weekly, Golden Days, Golden Hours, Golden

Prize, The New World, Brother Jonathan, Good News, Chimney Corner, Arm Chair, Young American, Stars and Stripes, Golden Argosy, Gleason's Monthly Pictorial, Harper's Weekly, Yankee Blade, Hours at Home, N. Y. Weekly, N. Y. Ledger, Fireside Companion, N. Y. Family Story Paper, N. Y. Mirror, Saturday Night, Star Spangled Banner, Boston Museum, Flag of our Union, The American Union, People's Literary Companion, Hearthstone, Weekly Novelist, Star Journal, Young Sports of America, Home Circle, True Flag and others. So you see I have quite a bunch of them.

Then I have quite a lot of "paints" (colored covers); also English weekly novels such as a nice run of "The Bullseye." Also a nice run of "The Thriller" as well as "The Surprise," "The Detective Weekly," "Boys' Favorite," "The Ranger," "The Rocket," "Boys' Popular," "The Startler," "The Firefly," "The Ruby," "Modern Boy," "Boys of England," "Boys' Comic Journal," "Princess Novelettes" "Something to Read," etc., etc.

Then I have quite a few of other kinds, as well as a lot of 3d and 4d bloods such as Boys' Friend, Boys' Own, Adventure, Schoolboys' Own, Champion Library, Dick Turpin Library, Tip Top Tales, Tip Top Detective Tales, Detective Tales, etc., etc.

Also have a few of the 1d stuff such as Claude Duval, Dick Turpin, Black Bess, Spring Heeled Jack, Jack Shepherd, Red Rover, The Diamond, Diamond War Library, Over Land and Sea, Adventure Series being Frank Reade tales, Boys' First-rate Pocket Library, Robin Hood, Travel and Adventure Library, Wild West Yarns, etc., also a few Hogarth House Novels and 15 to 20 other mixed of the penny dreadful class. Have a few English Bloods around 1840.

So you now have it, friends and pards. I have a set of the 3d Deadwood Dick Library. They are the same stories as are in our Library, but the pictures and titles are different, although about the same size and on heavier paper.

I also have some Deadwood Dick stories in the Boys' First Rate Pocket Library. These certainly are nice, you bet--in full colors--about the same size as our Handsome Harry Weekly, running to 32 pages. I believe these came out some time in the 1900's.

Frank Reade stories also appeared in the Invention Library, also in the Invention and Travel Library. These

are about as rare and as hard to get as our own Frank Reade Library.

Now in bound volumes, I have four volumes of Robin Hood Library. Nos. 1 to 80 complete, and they are a nice lot too. They came out early in the 1900's and are well illustrated.

Also have three volumes of Beadle's Monthly, believed to be the complete set for 1866 and 1867. Now boys, if you want to know a little more about me, see Dime Novel Roundup No. 40, for April 1935, entitled "My First Novel."

The above takes in most of the interesting part of my sleuthing for dime-novels and story-papers, as far as I can now recall. Some day I may try to write all of my life history, if you care to have it.

Bidding you all "Adieu" for this time, and wishing you all Health and the best of luck ALWAYS.

SYLVANUS COBB JR.

Sylvanus Cobb Sr., was born in Norway, Maine, July 17th, 1798 and spent his youth on his father's farm. He became a Universalist Minister. In the spring of 1839 he commenced the publication of the *Cristian Freeman*, a denominational paper, also devoted to temperance, and opposed to slavery. He published this paper for twenty-five years. He died Oct. 31, 1867, aged 69.

Sylvanus Cobb Jr. was born in Waterville, Maine, June 5, 1823. In the spring of 1838, his father moved from East Boston to Waltham. When his father started the *Cristian Freeman*, which required the establishment of a printing-office, and Sylvanus determined to enter the office and become a printer; and in less than two years he was amply qualified to take charge of the office. He had become a good printer, and a printer he has been proud to call himself ever since.

In 1841, he shipped in the United States Navy. He went to the Mediterranean in the *Brandywine* frigate, sailing from New York in June, 1841. In little less than a year he was transferred to the sloop of War *Fairfield*, on board of which vessel he remained over two years, visiting in that time every port of note—European, Asiatic and African—on the historic shores of that grand old sea. He came home in the line of battle ship *Delaware*. In the spring of 1844 he was discharged from the Navy.

He now at once resumed his place

at the head of his fathers printing office, which had been removed to Boston. In May 1846, in company with his younger brother Samuel T., he started a new paper devoted to temperance, literature, and general news entitled "The *Rechabite*." This paper was continued little more than a year, when its list was sold to the publisher of the "New England *Washingtonian*" with Mr. Cobb as editor.

In the summer of 1850 he started writing for F. Gleason, and continued to write for him until the close of 1855.

In March of 1856 Mr. Cobb received a flattering offer from Robert Bonner, of New York. The offer was accepted, and shortly thereafter a contract was entered into for a term of years, and from that time to the present, a period of more than thirty years, the contract has remained unbroken.

A remark made by Mr. Cobb to the writer of this (William Berry Lapham in 1886) is worthy of a place here. Said he, in speaking of his relation with his employers, "During the thirty years and a little more that I have written exclusively for Mr. Bonner, he has never, by so much as a hint, urged me beyond my own inclination to write; and never a word of fault finding or dissatisfaction passed between us; and with regards to remuneration, he has paid me far more than he ever engaged to pay me."

To Sylvanus Cobb Jr. Norway was his vacation home of his boyhood. Here with his uncles, his aunts, and his cousins, he spent many a happy season. Later, when he had determined to find a home away from the turmoil of the city his thoughts turned to the home of his fathers; and thither in the summer of 1852, he moved, with his family, where he resided until the April of 1856, when having made a contract with Mr. Bonner of the *New York Ledger*, he removed to New York. After a year and a half he returned to Norway where he lived until 1867, when he moved to East Boston. A year later he went to Hyde Park, Mass.

While in Norway Mr. Cobb served on the School Committee for several years, was chief of the Fire Department, was Captain of the Norway Light Infantry and for five years Master of Oxford Lodge of Masons.

The above was taken from "The Centennial History of Norway by William Berry Lapham. Published in 1886.

Mr. Cobb died July 20, 1887 at Hyde Park, Mass. Mr. Cobb's great fame as

a writer was established while living at Norway. As a writer of fiction he does not rank with the great English novelist, but in his day his writings were universally read by the great mass of the people, and exerted a powerful influence for good, especially in the time of the Civil War, for he taught a clean and pure affection of the sexes, nobility of character, high ideals and a lofty patriotism.

(From the History of Norway by Charles Whitman.)

Credited to C. B. Hamilton, Norway, Maine.

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RALPH CUMMINGS
Grafton, Mass.

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